

Appendix table 7-4

Public interest in selected issues: 1981–2010

(Percent)

Issue	1981 (n = 3,193)	1983 (n = 1,631)	1985 (n = 2,003)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,005)	1992 (n = 1,995)	1995 (n = 2,006)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2008 (n = 2,021)	2010 (n = 1,461)
New medical discoveries												
Very interested	NA	NA	68	72	68	66	69	70	68	65	58	60
Moderately interested	NA	NA	29	25	29	31	27	26	28	32	36	35
Not at all interested	NA	NA	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	6	5
Don't know/refused to answer	NA	NA	0	*	0	*	*	*	*	0	1	1
Local school issues												
Very interested	46	46	47	51	50	54	57	58	54	59	46	54
Moderately interested	36	36	39	33	34	35	31	30	34	31	40	36
Not at all interested	18	18	14	15	16	12	12	11	12	10	15	9
Don't know/refused to answer	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	1
Environmental pollution												
Very interested	NA	NA	NA	NA	64	59	52	52	51	48	47	46
Moderately interested	NA	NA	NA	NA	31	36	41	40	41	43	42	46
Not at all interested	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	5	6	8	8	8	10	7
Don't know/refused to answer	NA	NA	NA	NA	*	*	*	*	*	0	1	1
Economic issues and business conditions												
Very interested	52	57	48	48	51	56	47	47	42	45	46	44
Moderately interested	37	33	41	42	40	36	42	42	45	45	43	45
Not at all interested	10	10	11	10	10	8	11	11	13	10	11	10
Don't know/refused to answer	*	1	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	1
New scientific discoveries												
Very interested	37	48	44	43	39	36	44	49	45	47	38	41
Moderately interested	45	41	43	46	49	49	45	42	43	45	47	50
Not at all interested	17	11	12	12	12	15	11	9	11	8	15	8
Don't know/refused to answer	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	1	*	*	1
Use of new inventions and technologies												
Very interested	33	42	39	40	39	37	43	47	41	42	40	40
Moderately interested	51	45	49	49	49	53	46	43	48	47	46	48
Not at all interested	16	12	12	12	12	10	11	10	10	10	13	10
Don't know/refused to answer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	1
Military and defense policy												
Very interested	NA	43	47	47	55	47	37	35	42	38	38	37
Moderately interested	NA	42	42	42	35	43	46	48	44	44	47	47
Not at all interested	NA	15	11	11	9	10	17	18	14	18	15	15
Don't know/refused to answer	NA	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	1
Agricultural and farm issues												
Very interested	24	NA	30	40	24	NA	21	24	22	29	22	25
Moderately interested	47	NA	48	45	48	NA	53	50	50	46	52	55
Not at all interested	29	NA	22	15	28	NA	26	26	28	25	26	20
Don't know/refused to answer	*	NA	*	0	0	NA	1	*	*	*	*	1

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Issue	1981 (n = 3,193)	1983 (n = 1,631)	1985 (n = 2,003)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,005)	1992 (n = 1,995)	1995 (n = 2,006)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2008 (n = 2,021)	2010 (n = 1,461)
Space exploration												
Very interested	25	27	29	34	26	22	25	32	28	26	21	23
Moderately interested	43	45	46	44	48	50	49	45	46	47	45	49
Not at all interested	31	28	25	22	26	28	26	22	25	27	34	27
Don't know/refused to answer	*	*	0	1	0	*	*	1	1	*	*	1
International and foreign policy issues												
Very interested	35	30	33	33	48	38	21	23	30	28	23	22
Moderately interested	47	47	51	50	39	47	53	50	47	49	48	48
Not at all interested	18	22	16	16	12	15	26	28	23	22	29	29
Don't know/refused to answer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	2

NA = not available, question not asked; * = <0.5% responded

NOTES: Responses to *There are a lot of issues in the news, and it is hard to keep up with every area. I'm going to read you a short list of issues, and for each one I would like you to tell me if you are very interested, moderately interested, or not at all interested.* Table includes all years for which data collected. Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1981–2001); and University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey (2008–10).

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